

Columbus Land Bank Programs

The Columbus Land Bank Program receives most properties through the Franklin County Tax Foreclosure process, under the Land Reutilization Program established by Ohio Revised Code Section 5722. Additionally, the City of Columbus will accept donations of real property and, from time-to-time, purchase properties for neighborhood revitalization efforts. Most of these properties are made available for purchase, often at a substantially reduced price. Priority is given to projects that intended to revitalize neighborhoods, increase affordable housing opportunities, and stimulate economic development within the City of Columbus.

\$500 Vacant Lot Program—Most properties offered for sale by the Columbus Land Bank are vacant lots located in neighborhoods in need of significant investment. These lots are priced considerably below market value and are available to developers interested in building single-family houses for homeownership. To ensure the property is developed according to Land Bank policies, an agreement between the developer and the City is attached to the deed requiring the property to be developed in a certain manner and within a specific time period. If the developer fails to develop following the terms of the agreement, the City can revert ownership back into the Land Bank. These lots will be listed on the “City Property for Sale” link on the City of Columbus website.

Other Vacant Lots—Vacant lots owned by the Columbus Land Bank located outside the neighborhoods focused for redevelopment and all commercial properties are sold at a market rate for development. Typical developments include expansion of businesses, construction of rental housing, redevelopment of commercial corridors, etc. The market rate is typically the appraised value determined by the County Auditor, but may be adjusted based on a separate appraisal or market conditions of the area. An agreement between the developer and the City is required, ensuring the property is developed for uses that are beneficial to the City (for example, consistent with a neighborhood plan).

Vacant Structure Program—Often the Columbus Land Bank will own vacant residential or commercial structures. These structures are normally in very poor condition and are in need of significant renovation. Structures will be marketed for sale at the Auditor’s Appraised value, but may be adjusted based on the condition of the structure and the comparable sales in the area. Preference will be given to homeownership developments. To ensure the property is renovated to a high standard, an agreement between the developer and the City is attached to the deed requiring the property to be renovated in a specific manner (including construction specifications), for a particular use, and in a definite time period.

\$1 Garden Lease Program—Vacant lots within the Columbus Land Bank are available for lease to community groups, adjacent property owners, businesses, and others interested in beautifying or greening their community. Past projects include community gardens, landscaped pocket parks, green space, and other projects that improve the surrounding neighborhood.

Side Yard Program—Vacant lots too small for redevelopment or are otherwise not developable, may be purchased by an adjacent property owner(s) for a nominal price. The adjacent owner must abut the vacant lot and agree to consolidate the land into one parcel. The City will consider the sale of a developable vacant lot to an adjacent property owner(s) for the market value of the vacant lot.

RFP/RFQ Notices—Occasionally, the City of Columbus will issue Requests for Qualifications/Requests for Proposals to solicit development proposals for a particular building or vacant land. The RFQ/RFP will contain specific guidelines on the procedure to select a developer, and what criteria will be used to evaluate the proposals.

With the exception of the Side Yard Program, the City will sell land only for specific development projects. The City will not sell to investors intending to hold the land for resale without improving the property. **The City of Columbus hereby reserves the absolute right to accept or reject any and all land use/development proposals and offers for purchase, and reserves the right to condition the sale on the buyer's acceptance of deed restrictions controlling the subsequent improvements of the land. Additionally, the City may require approval from the Land Review Commission, an Area Commission, or other panel established by the Department of Development to review a development proposal. All sales must receive the approval of Columbus City Council.**

Policies on transfer of property:

1. An application is required to purchase any property from the Land Bank, regardless of the program.
2. Application must include a narrative describing the proposed project, construction plans, the end use, budget, and whether the intended use is for rent or sale. The City may require a minimum amount of renovation work to be performed as a condition of transfer.
3. All projects must be started and completed in a timeframe negotiated by the Land Redevelopment Office staff.
4. Grantee (buyer) must have relevant experience, including at least two projects similar to the proposed project.
5. Grantee must not own or have a history of ownership of any tax delinquent properties.
6. Grantee must not own or have a history of ownership of any property cited for violation of local and state codes.
7. If the subject property falls within the boundaries of an Area Commission, Grantee must receive a letter of support from that Commission.